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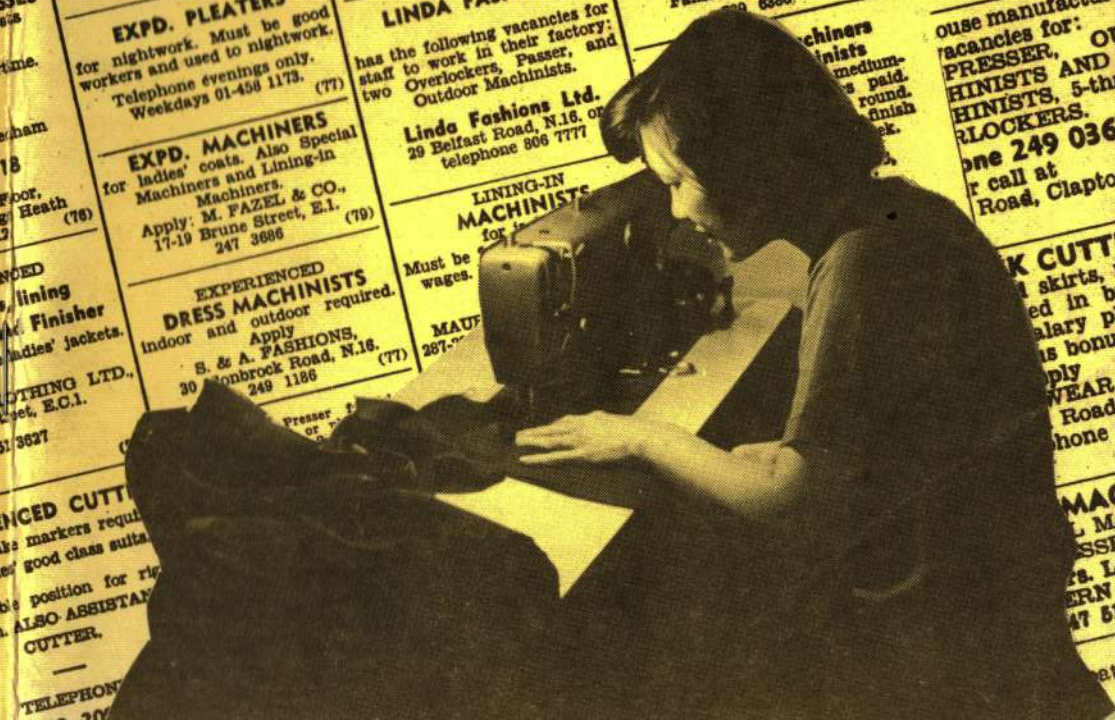
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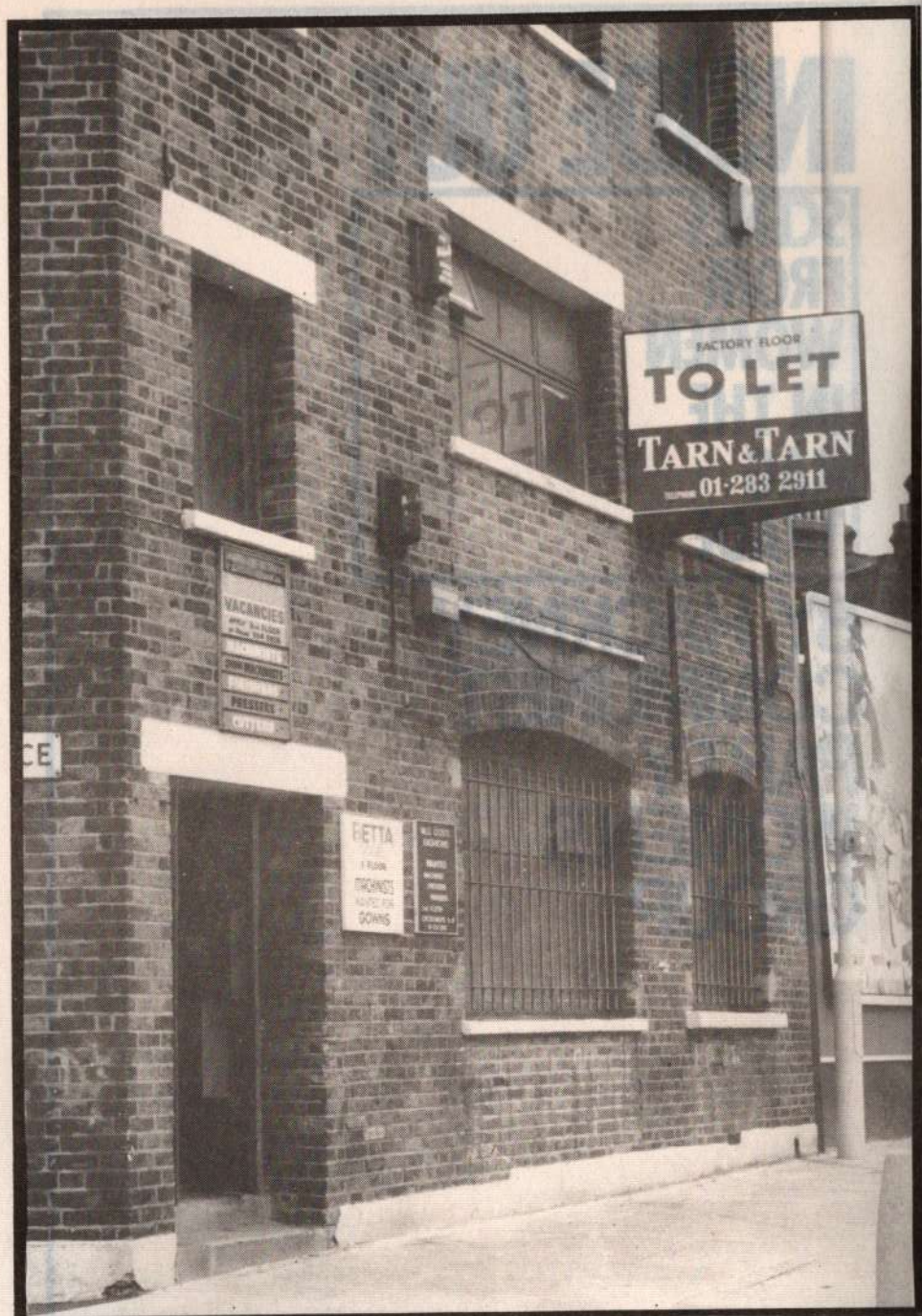
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INSIDE OUT

**SCENES
FROM
WOMEN
IN THE
RAG
TRADE**

**BY HACKNEY
COMMUNIST
PARTY
WOMEN'S
GROUP**



Walk along Dalston Lane, up Ashwin Street, and through to Ridley Road, heading towards Shacklewell Lane. It's not far - it might take you 20 minutes. Signboards everywhere, Denelight, Mindy, Rimplan, Palenstar, Multimodes and dozens of others. Small factories, crammed into basements, behind shop fronts, on one floor of a half empty warehouse, in someone's back room. Some recently boarded up or left semi-derelict, premises for sale or to let. All are clothing factories. It could be anywhere in Hackney, for clothing is the most important manufacturing industry, employing over 12,000 people locally. And most of those workers are women.

This is the story of those women, told partly in their own words and partly through the few facts and figures available. It's by no means a complete account. The issues are those most often commented on when discussing women's employment - what jobs women do, do, wages, equal pay and job security, health, childcare, home-working and union membership. The experiences and information about Hackney gathered here will, we hope, be useful; we didn't always find what we expected. And if it helps to illustrate the need for basic changes in our society, so much the better.

of contract, and many work for lower rates.

Making Clothes

Hackney has always been an important area for clothing. Until recently, much of the work was Outerwear - tailored suits and coats for the high quality ready-to-wear market. Factories were large, employing over 1000 people, mainly men. But most of these factories have gone, taking advantages of grants to move out to the suburbs or Development Areas, or closed altogether, victims of the changing market in menswear from be-

Some factories which closed in Hackney in the last 20 years

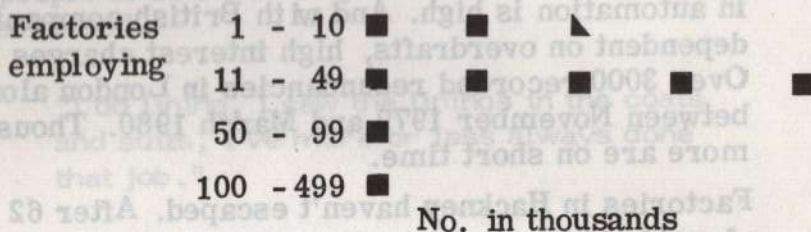
SIMPSON'S	Employed about 2000		
WILLOUGHBY'S	"	"	1500
HECTOR POWE	"	"	1500
POLLIKOFFS	"	"	1000
HORNE'S	"	"	300
MOSS BROS	"	"	150

spoke tailoring to casual clothes. But that wasn't the end of the industry; small workshops, sweatshops, sprung up to take their place, employing women and immigrant workers.

"Ours is a small factory, about 22 on the machining floor. It's owned by two sons and their mother - she's dead now. It used to be a family factory, some of the women are 60 and 70 years old. Now younger people, Turks, are coming into the trade".

Almost all these factories make women's clothing - either high quality outerwear (costume and mantle in the trade) or cheap dresses and light clothing.

Number of employees 1976 for size of unit



A few Hackney factories sell direct to shops, but many operate as outworkers for major companies - Windsmoor, Marks and Spencers, Burberry's.

"We make coats and jackets for C & A, Top Shop, Littlewoods, British Home Stores. We do mail order as well".

It's convenient for the major companies. They do the designing, make the patterns, undertake marketing - someone else has to cope with changes in fashion, lay-off workers, have machines idle, train new workers, keep up-to-date with new equipment. And small factories find it difficult to raise investment - an automatic basting machine with variable temperature controls for synthetic fibres costs anything from £ 40, 000.

To avoid these problems, manufacturers employ home-workers to do part-work, usually seaming, sleeves, linings. They cost the employer nothing in heating, lighting and National Insurance, they have no security of contract, and many work for lower rates.

It's the outworkers and homeworkers who are suffering most in the current recession. As living standards fall, people have less money to spend on clothes. A 20% rate of inflation, plus 15% V.A.T. has made garments expensive. Also imports are cheaper, not just from Third World countries, but also from Europe, particularly West Germany and Finland where investment in automation is high. And with British companies dependent on overdrafts, high interest charges hit hard. Over 3000 recorded redundancies in London alone between November 1979 and March 1980. Thousands more are on short time.

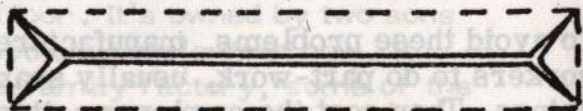
Factories in Hackney haven't escaped. After 62 years of making high quality suits and coats for the West End, including Harrods, Mono's in Shoreditch shut in December 1979.

"I don't know why we're closing really; he says it's because of high costs, the clothes are too expensive and they can't sell everything we make."

Homeworkers have also been affected.

"I know lots of people who have lost work. One day the man says 'there's no more'. It's very difficult for them."

No-one sees a bright future for the industry in the months ahead.



Jobs for the Girls

Walk into any clothing factory and you're immediately struck by the lack of automation, the importance of the skills of cutters and machinists, the large number of people in so small a space. The work is highly specialised.

"I do lining, I sew the linings in the coats and suits, I've more or less always done that job."

"Piecing up means making up the sleeves and belts."

"I'm a special machinist - buttons, button-holes, felling, overlocking, all those sort of things."

"As a top machinist, it means you can do any part of the garment, you can make the complete garment out."

"I'm a finisher, it's the last thing done by hand. I won't work the machines, they're too big and dangerous, so I won't go near them."

Almost all the jobs are done by women. Men tend to do particular jobs like cutting and pressing, but the women we spoke to didn't feel that these were the better jobs.

"They do the same as women, they work on the machines; but men don't do the job I do, finishing."

"There are three boys, the governor's son and another man, all the cutters are men. No women has ever asked to do cutting."

Most outerwear factories employ:

- CUTTER:** cuts the cloth to the pattern
- FIXER:** bastes the stiffening to the fabric
- SPECIAL MACHINIST:** special work like buttons, buttonholes, felling etc.
- TOP MACHINIST:** can make the whole garment
- PLAIN MACHINIST:** overlocking seams, linings
- TAILOR:** tacks shoulder pads, sleeves, collars to get the shape
- FINISHER:** hand sews to finish garment neatly
- PRESSER:** irons and shapes the garment
- PASSER:** checks final quality of garment

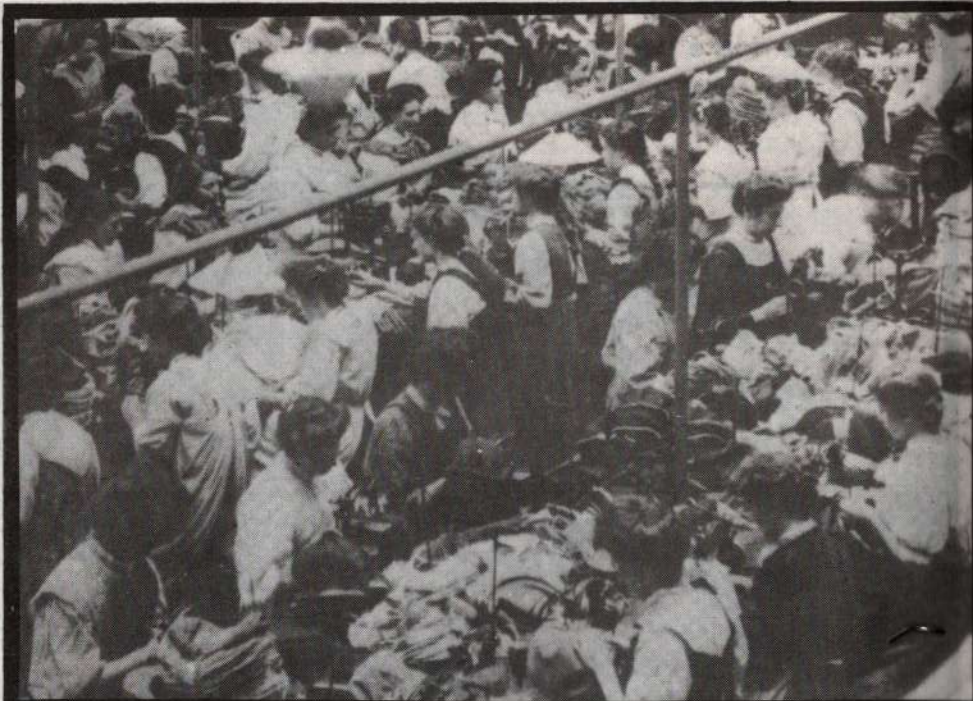
Moving to a new section of work isn't easy. Most factories have no formal training, either for newcomers or those wanting more skills. Evening classes stopped many years ago. The Clothing and Allied Industries Training Board have schemes around the country, but employers in London aren't interested.

When trade is good, they can poach by offering higher wages; now, they lay off the least skilled, and drop the rate.

Because training is a problem, it's been difficult to recruit young people; many of the women have been in the trade a long time.



Hackney factories: big manufacturers closed down,
only small workshops remain (E. Greenwood)



East-end garment making: last century and today
(Nat. Museum Labour History, Report)

"Well, I did a five-year apprenticeship - but now you come in and if you can use a machine, a few weeks tuition and if you're in any way quick you pick it up."

"When I went into the trade, I'm going back a few many years now, we used to work with experienced persons, we'd have the whole bundle and do it right out, but now it's different, now you go as a section worker."

With no set criteria for defining different grades of work, moving up a grade is often a question of luck and nerve:

"I went to Shoreditch and got more money because I had the cheek to say I was experienced. Some places give you a trial, but I was lucky. If I didn't know how to do something I would ask - I'd say 'you do it differently in this factory' - then they'd show you. But you had to be quick, or they'll throw you out. That's how I became a top machinist."

As factories close down, getting another job appears to raise few fears for some:

"This is my first trade; when I get fed up with it I just go off and do different things. I've worked in a cigarette factory, spirit factory, tea factory, it makes no difference really, it's only the money that matters."

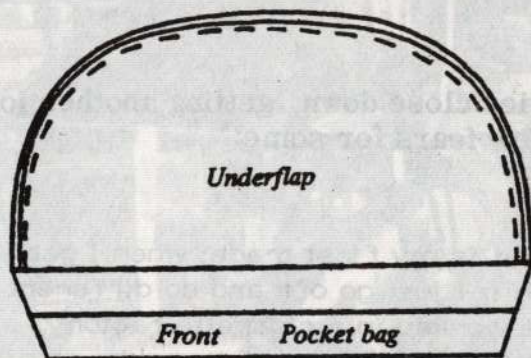
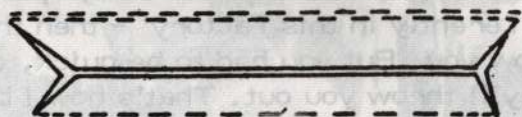
"I haven't looked for anything yet because you can't start until you finish here; I've never had any problems. I might look for something different, but this is all I know."

But for others, another job isn't so easy:

"Because I'm older, there's not much, cleaning, tea lady. There's not many opportunities from where I live." (Har ingey)

"It's a shame this place is closing down. It was convenient, local and the hours more or less flexi. Conditions were good compared to some places."

WS



RS

Not Pin Money...but Peanuts!

Wages in the clothing industry have always been low. From the beginning of this century attempts have been made to regulate pay through the Wages Council Agreements. The minimum rate for 79/80 for working a 40 hour week was set at 105p. per hour.

Outside London, many workers are at or even below this legal minimum. In Hackney, the shortage of skilled labour has pushed up the rate, although home-workers and those working in very small sweat shops often get less. Average rates quoted were £1.60 to £2.00 per hour: pay for a full-time machinist of £55. to £60 per week. Cutters (men's jobs) were more likely to earn £100 a week.

But comparing rates in the industry is difficult. Machinists, examiners, passers and fixers are usually on piece-rate; others are on time-rate - final examining, quality control, cutters. But many machinists also work time-rate.

How much you earn is a secret. In one factory no two machinists will necessarily be earning the same.

"Everyone gets what they have individually arranged between themselves and the governor, and he tells you to keep it to yourself."

"Everyone is paid a different amount, it depends on your ability. You set your own price. I came here as a top machinist so therefore I negotiate what I think I'm worth. I know what the going rate is but if you think you deserve something better you go ahead and ask."

Often, especially in the smallest places, work is 'off the book'. No record of payment is made by the employer who gives cash-in-hand. If you're earning less than £55 a week, paying tax and National Insurance isn't very attractive. But getting more money can be hazardous.

"My friend, one day I saw the boss come up and give her £5. I asked her what for and she said she'd been to see him to get more money, but she didn't want it on her slip. So every week he gives it to her in her hand. But now he's forgetting and she has to keep asking - she doesn't like it."

Many women in Hackney don't work a full 40 hour week. Part-time hours vary, but somewhere between 26 and 35 hours is common. So few women earn more than £50 a week. And part-time rates don't appear to be covered by the Equal Pay Act. At least that's what the women workers at Mono's found when they went to the Equal Pay Tribunal.

"The Tribunal, there was no-one on the bench who knew anything about this trade. They didn't know what we were talking about, facings, piecing up and such."

"We picked out who we thought was earning more, we had to put our names down against as many as we felt were earning more than us. Some women picked out men who were only earning a penny more. Two women went to the Tribunal and found they were earning more than the men. We looked fools. The men wouldn't tell us beforehand. The Union should be entitled to ask."

"One case, she was working in a set with men, whilst we were working in sets with all women. They put her with the highest paid man she was working with."

"We lost the Appeal on part-time. He (the boss) said the women were privileged to be able to work part-time. At that time I didn't know he had two men working upstairs part-time."

"The Chairman, he said he had a part-time secretary and there were times when he needed her and she wasn't there. But it's not the same, when you're not sitting at the machine, some-one else is - you expect the same hourly rate. After all, I work 26 hours a week, and come every day. I still have the same fares as full-time workers, over £1 a day. It's about time people got travel allowances off their tax."

"We went up first and then he (the boss) went up afterwards so he could say what he liked and you couldn't say - 'well, that's not true'".

"One woman here on tailoring, if anything goes wrong with the work, a little hole, she can invisible mend which none of the men can. The boss said the man was paid more because as well as being a tailor he booked in the work. But all he had to do was to write a number on a bit of paper and hang the work up. That's all he had to do. But the woman lost because he spoke as though that man had big books to look after. We didn't get a chance to challenge that."

"The Tribunal's put there to make you feel, well, they're trying, but they're not really."

So even when payment is by the hour, the Tribunal ruled that an equal hourly rate only applies if you work 40 hours a week. It's not surprising that employers willingly take part-time workers. For many many women, this is one of the attractions of clothing.

"I work 9.30 to 3.30 because you can't leave the kids to go to school, they'd never go."

"I leave at 8.30 from Woolwich Arsenal and get here about 9.30, they're quite good about that."

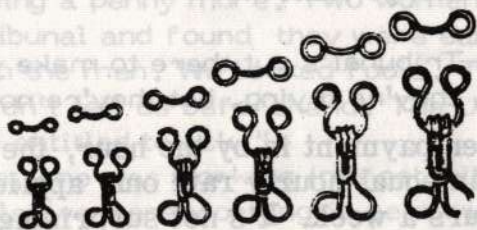
For full-time workers the day can be long. Half the women who work in Hackney don't live in the Borough; clothing is no exception.

"I work 8.30 to 4.40, it takes me about one and a half hours to get here by tube and bus."

"Some of the old women work part-time, but I work 8am to 5pm."

Holiday entitlements are negotiated by the Union and incorporated into the Wages Council Agreements. But in many of the smaller factories, getting holidays with pay can be a problem, especially if you're working part-time. But here again, if you've got skills, employers can appear generous:

"I think I can have three weeks paid, but we go to see our family in Spain so I say how much much I want and I can go. Unpaid of course. Some factories won't let you do that, they even say when you can go."



On the inside

..... It's lunchtime, half an hour to eat your sandwiches, have a cup of tea, and get on with a bit of your own work. You'll have to eat at the bench, between the machines, scissors, threads, half-made garments. If you're lucky you can make a cup of tea in the kitchen, partitioned off in the corner. Feel a bit off-colour, well sorry but there's nowhere for you to lie down.....

Something out of the last century? No, just the average clothing factory.

"Our new factory, its got no rest room or canteen, just a little kitchen to make tea. All I know, when they built it new, an inspector came."

There are all sorts of hidden hazards around. Open any copy of the Tailor and Garment Workers' Journal for the compensation awarded for industrial injuries - to Mrs., N.E. London, £313.05. She'd tripped down the stairs at work and broken her ankle, because there were no lights. A more serious accident might bring £1000.

But many health complaints just aren't recognised as resulting from working conditions, or else are put down to carelessness.

"I have glasses for working now - but it's difficult to say it's because of the work, it could be my age."

Clothing factories are notorious fire hazards - old buildings, narrow staircases, faulty wiring, hot presses, synthetic fibres, corridors blocked with racks of clothes and cardboard boxes.

"The factory where I work was burnt down a few months ago, a fault in the wiring I think. Luckily it was a night. Now it's quite new. I don't know if there are any safety regulations, even since the fire we haven't had a fire practice."

None of the women we spoke to could ever remember having instructions about accidents or fire. They'd just get out as best they could. Yet Health and Safety is the employer's responsibility and fire drills are compulsory under the Health and Safety at Work Act. But with few inspectors, enforcement of this and other requirements is almost impossible.



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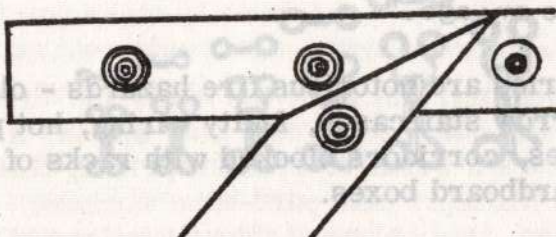
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8 Press studs. Actual size



Check list of Health and Safety Hazards in Clothing

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Cause</u>
BAD CHEST, COUGHING	Fibres in atmosphere Fumes from presses, especially velvet, mohair, peroxide, ammonia in dyes
HEADACHE, EYE STRAIN	Poor lighting Fine work required Inadequate break periods Noise
BACKACHE	Chairs not the right height Inadequate break period
NEEDLE SPLINTERS IN FINGERS, EYES, etc.	Inadequate guards Poor quality machines, not serviced regularly Incorrect machine for the work
DIRT AND STAINING OF THE SKIN	Heavy fabrics, dusty and staining dyes
ACCIDENTS SUCH AS TRIPPING AND FALLING	Boxes, racks of clothes in gangways Inadequate storage space No time given to cleaning up
STRESS	General result of - noise, bad lighting, poor venti- lation, piecework pressure, heat

What about the Children?

Paid work is only one of the jobs women do, there's also the family to look after.

"I work part-time because even when they work, they're still your responsibility - they still expect something to eat when they come home from work."

The majority of women we spoke to were either without children or had grown-up children.

"I've two big girls, one's working and the other's at school, so I don't worry about them."

Working in clothing is difficult for those with younger children and childcare is a constant anxiety.

"I leave them with my mum, but I worry if she gets sick or something. I have to take time off. No, the boss doesn't mind."

One alternative to 'mum' is a childminder. Hackney is better off than some parts of London for registered childminders, but it's still not enough, and can be expensive. £12 a week is the rate for looking after a child through Hackney Association of Childminders, not much for working maybe 50 hours a week. But it can still be too much when your own pay is less than £50.

Many women don't like leaving their children with childminders, especially if they're not registered. Often there's very little space or things to play with, too many children for one pair of hands. But there aren't many places available in nurseries either.

The most recent data published (a GLC report for March 1975, although probably little has changed since then), showed that for every 1000 children under five in Hackney, there were only 23 nursery places available. It's better to live in Camden or Islington, which have 85 places and 51 places respectively for every 1000 pre-school children. Yet despite the desperate need, three new nurseries built in Hackney are likely to remain closed.

Home Sweet Home

"I worked at home because of the children. I wanted to be there when they came back from school, not give them a key round their neck."

"Before I had the children I worked in a shirt factory. But after, it was very expensive to have them looked after. My mother used to look after my daughter but she didn't want to any more."

By working in their own homes, women combine paid work and housework. But it isn't easy when you're at everyone's beck and call:

"I'd like to go back to the factory - maybe I'd get more money because here I'm always doing things, helping people and my work is always behind. My governor doesn't send me work because of that."

Children need attention too.

"It's very hard with the children about. My little girl, she wasn't used to the

machine and when I started she used to go mad - she hated it. They get jealous and want to be picked up all the time."

"I don't do much when the children are at home, maybe when they're on holiday I do about 6 hours work a day. When they're at school I do more."

Providing nursery facilities and after-school care would help many homeworkers - but not all.

"Nursery places would be a good idea, but our people wouldn't like it."

Looking after your own children isn't the only pressure forcing ethnic minority women to work at home. Not speaking the language properly, being isolated in a strange factory, it's a frightening prospect. At home friends can come and chat while you work.

"My friend, I'm teaching her to sew. If she wants she comes here and helps me finish the garments."

But since most homeworkers arrange their work over the telephone, understanding the language is still important.

"I agree the price with the governor. You have to phone him up. I think he has a two-floor factory, but I've only been there once."

Initial contact with the governor may be made through friends or relatives. After that, the work arrives at the door.

"The man brings the work in a van. He comes regularly every day, but I only take it three days, because I can't finish it."

Delivering and collecting the work is often sub-contracted out by the factory. So it's even more difficult for a homeworker to make contact with her real employer.

In law, homeworkers are sometimes classed as employees and have some legal protections. But most are casual workers, treated by the factory as self-employed. So the governor avoids paying National Insurance or redundancy pay, and can stop supplying work at a moment's notice.

By accepting this, homeworkers avoid paying tax and insurance too. If they didn't, it wouldn't be worth working at all. But it means the governor can threaten to report you if you don't accept his terms.

However, regardless of the type of contract between the factory and the homeworker, Wages Council Minimum rates of pay should be offered. And from May 1980, the agreement includes holiday pay - for 80/81 this should be 5% of annual earnings, going up to 10% the following year.

Actual rates vary widely and are often well below the legal minimum. How much you get depends on how well you know the industry.

"The work I'm doing is very cheap. Some skirts are alright, you get 50p and there's plenty of work in them - in fact I get more than if they're made in the factory - but others are only 20p, if there's not much to them."

"If I do good work, maybe I get £70 a week, but but last week I got £30."

The same skirt costs £8 or £9 down Oxford Street. And a £35 jacket may have cost just £1.50 to machine.

Set against earnings are the costs of making the garment, most of which are paid by the homeworker.

"I bought the machine. They are £300 now, but I paid £165. Some people get a machine from the governor, but I like to have my own, because one day he might come and take it. We paid cash."

"I don't get any allowance for electricity, I think he should. And I have to pay for the machine to be serviced. But he provides all the materials, thread, stiffenings, fastenings."

So if you take out the extra costs, the real rate per item may be as low as 15p.

Homeworkers face the same safety hazards as in the factory - with children around it can be even more dangerous. Trailing wires, overloaded plugs, scissors and pins. Unsuitable chairs and bad light add to tiredness.

"After 8 hours at the machine, my arms ache terribly. My shoulders get very stiff. I need to do some exercises."

"I get very bad headaches with my eyes when I've been working for a long time."

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employers are responsible for homeworkers and should ensure that they are working in safe conditions. But checking is impossible - who wants the boss poking around their home. And in any case, if the employer found the premises unsuitable, he'd get some-one else rather than pay for improvements.

Even now, a homeworker may find herself unable to work at home because of planning regulations. If someone

Summary of HOMEWORKERS' CHARTER

We aim at full protection for those who work at home. We are campaigning for conditions that make homework a real choice rather than a forced necessity.

We pledge ourselves to agitate and organise for:

DECENT PAY AND CONDITIONS FOR HOMEWORKERS

1. Full status of 'employee', and extension of existing protective legislation to cover homeworkers.
2. Extension of Trade Union organisation to cover homeworking
3. Information to be fully publicised
4. Enforced obligations on employers to provide statistical details of homework
5. Pay equal to rates of unionised factories plus homework premium to cover overheads.

DECENT SOCIAL PROVISION TO END HOMEWORK

6. Improved Local Authority provision of
 - day-time care for all children
 - for elderly and handicapped dependents
 - english language for immigrants
7. State benefits like family allowance to be raised to end financial necessity of taking in homework
8. Extension of government training programmes with pay
9. Enforcement of employers disablement quotas.

claims that the noise of the machine is a nuisance or that the use of the property has changed, then it may be illegal to continue working there. This can often act as a threat even if enforcement is unlikely:

"We were living in a two-room flat and I machined from 10 am to 4 pm. I stopped then because of the noise. When we moved, I couldn't continue because of the neighbours. They said they'd get the council. I was told it was against the law to work at home in this area."

So many rules and regulations which no-one knows about. Working for very long hours for very low pay, disrupting your home. It's not perhaps surprising that homeworkers are beginning to complain. Some women in Hackney are part of the London Homeworking Campaign, set up to improve life for homeworkers. They've drawn up a charter of demands for changes in the law and improved local facilities.

And Hackney is the first Council to appoint a Homeworking Officer - someone to make contact with homeworkers and provide them with information.

It's a good idea. But why didn't they realise that many women, especially from ethnic minorities, aren't likely to welcome a male official into their homes. And in the end, improving conditions for homeworkers depends on getting better wages and conditions for all workers in the industry.

Women together

About 2000 workers in Hackney belong to the Tailor and Garment Workers union, most of them women. Organising the industry is a nightmare - so many small units opening and closing, employers openly hostile.



Homeworking: 1906 and today (Nat. Museum Labour History, Report)



With a small membership on low wages, union funds are less than adequate. In such a fragmented industry, organisation is heavily dependent on full-time officials. Only two are available to try and organise the 70,000 workers in the whole of the London region.

Much of their time is spent representing members on Tribunals, keeping in contact with organised workplaces. There's not much time to try and locate non-union factories, or do the research necessary to find out what's going on. Inevitably, the smaller factories get left out.

Views of Tailor and Garment Workers Union members on problems of recruitment.

ANTI-TRADE UNION EMPLOYERS: in family firms the governor is on the premises, keeping a watch on the workforce, creating fear and intimidation.

SMALL SIZE OF FACTORIES: withdrawal of labour would have almost no impact on customers, especially where they supply the designs and patterns, production can quickly be switched elsewhere.

LUMP LABOUR : 'off the book' transactions keep work-force suspicious of each other.

SPECIALISATION: so many different jobs in the trade, with each person negotiating their own rate, keeps workers divided.

LANGUAGE: large numbers of ethnic minority workers with language problems and no experience of what a trade union is.

The boss and the fear of intimidation remain one of the biggest hurdles to making new members.

"People talk very openly to the governor. A Turkish girl came to work here, and she tried to draw the attention of the other Turkish workers to conditions in Turkey - not here, but they weren't interested. Now we've not much work, they've told her to leave, not anyone else."

And with the industry a jungle, the Union can be seen as disturbing time-honoured practices:

"You'll generally find in a firm like this, the rate of pay is less, the conditions are better, but the rate is less than in a non-Union place, where its free bargaining. Here the Union will get you the annual increment, but if you want more, you go and ask."

Where women have joined the Union, its advantages are recognised:

"This is a Union shop, and you're more or less protected, the management can't say 'clear off out'."

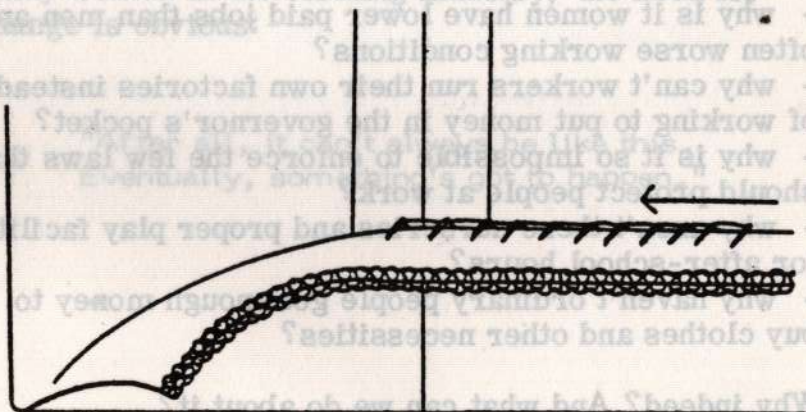
Typical of the issues taken up include provision of first-aid rooms, proper toilet facilities, bringing in the public health inspector to measure fume levels and ventilation.

Getting even these basic rights in each factory requires a high level of Union membership. With weak organisation in the early stages, benefits of joining often appear small. It's a vicious circle.

What can the Union do?

Get the employer to adopt the National Negotiating Agreement with the Clothing Manufacturer's Federation. This allows the Union to:

1. Negotiate annual increases in wages - for 79/80 this was $17\frac{1}{2}\%$.
2. Increase paid holiday allowances - this is 18 days minimum at present.
3. Lay down procedures for dealing with complaints by employees or employer so that employees are protected.
4. Take up issues such as piece-rate, bad conditions and so on.



Overlocking and felling

Time for a change

"The needle was the staple employment of women in London throughout the nineteenth century. Economic instability accentuated the seasonal nature of the work, making the skilled needlewoman's living precarious. As slopwork (cheap goods) increased, so did the number of out or homeworkers, and the embroideresses, sempstresses, tambourers, artificial flower makers, makers of fine and expensive shirts, could no longer rely on regular employment, not even in the fashionable West End sectors of the trade."

(S. Alexander: Women's work in 19th Century London).

A hundred years later, and what's changed? As this pamphlet shows, women clothing workers still earn very low pay, work in bad and over-crowded conditions, find themselves out of work with little or no warning.

It makes you think !

- why is it women have lower paid jobs than men and often worse working conditions?
- why can't workers run their own factories instead of working to put money in the governor's pocket?
- why is it so impossible to enforce the few laws that should protect people at work?
- why aren't there nurseries and proper play facilities for after-school hours?
- why haven't ordinary people got enough money to buy clothes and other necessities?

Why indeed? And what can we do about it?

Changing our working lives in Hackney overnight is a bit of a tall order, but we can make a start - by demanding higher wages - greater protection for homeworkers - more Health and Safety inspectors - legal requirements that employers allow Union representatives on to their premises - nursery facilities for all children under five.

However, even these small improvements for working women aren't at all popular with the present Conservative Government. One Minister has pronounced:

"If the Good Lord had intended us to have equal rights to go out to work, he wouldn't have created men and women."

They're more interested in closing nurseries, cutting maternity rights, pushing women out of employment. And by attacking Trade Unions they want to stop us organising any protest.

Whether they succeed or not depends on us. And for many women in the clothing industry, the need for change is obvious:

"After all, it can't always be like this. Eventually, something's got to happen."

Time for a change

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who helped in the preparation and production of this pamphlet, and particularly the women who gave up their lunch breaks to talk to us.

Whether they succeed or not depends on us. And for many women in the clothing industry, the need for change is obvious.

- why can't workers run their own factories instead of working for a capitalist?
- why can't we have a shorter working day?
- why can't we have a living wage?
- why can't we have proper play facilities for after-school hours?
- why haven't ordinary people got enough money to buy clothes and other necessities?

Why indeed? And what can we do about it?

Morning Star

"Unlike the majority
of women's pages it
stands unequivocally
with the Women's
Liberation Movement . . ."

Yvonne Roberts

in "OVER 21"

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